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AN  
ANSWER  
TO A  
LETTER

FROM A  
Gentleman in the Country,

Relating to the

**Present Ministry,**

AND  
Men in Employments.



L O N D O N,

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S I R,

**Y**OUR Letter of the twelfth Instant finds me under the same Fears with your self, but not so deep in Despair ; because I think it possible for a good King to mend Mal-Administration, tho not probable for a Nation so soon to return to that Power which has cost three Kingdoms so much Blood and Treasure to throw off.

Good men are too apt to fear Judgments, because they know we deserve them : This, give me leave to think, is your Case ; but we ought not positively to determine any thing : That would be to measure Divine Providence by humane Conduct. I think the Rule of *Democrates* more agreeable to our present Circumstances, That whoever would live content, must propound to himself things possible, and submit to things present. Why may not we hope the King will change hands ? and then we should not be so much disturbed with the present state of Affairs. But I come to the seven particulars, to which you desire my Answer.

First, *Whether I ever read in Story, Sacred or Profane, of such Frauds in the Management of the Treasure of any Nation?*

Secondly, *Whether there can be parallel'd in any Heathen, not to say Christian Government, such immoral, and profane Men in places of Power, and Trust?*

Thirdly, *Whether I have ever heard, in any Christian Government, of a Clergy that so tenderly handled the Sins of a Nation, and the Vices of great Men, as our Clergy in this Nation?*

Fourthly, *Whether this fault in our Clergy, and a greater Corruption in those we call the Whig, or Dissenting party, have not given our Enemies, the Church of Rome, greater matter of scandal against the Protestant Religion, than any thing that has happen'd since the Reformation?*

Fifthly, *Whether unæer our present Management and Conduct, it may not be easy for the late King to return, and establish himself without a foren Force?*

Sixthly, *Whether all these things being consider'd, it does not look as if God had left the Nation to a spirit of Delusion, to trust in Lies; that we may fall into the hands of Enemies, who design the extirpation of our Nation and Religion?*

Seventhly, *Whether a Government that neither rewards nor punishes, does not suppress Virtue, and encourage Vice?*

Here end your seven Queries, of which I shall give my Opinion, tho I am sure it cannot inform your better Judgment.

Your first Query is, *Whether I ever read in Story, Christian, or Heathen, of such Frauds in the Management of the Treasure of any Nation?*



I must own I never did ; And the reason may be, because we have nothing like our Constitution, and late Revolution in all its parts, in History. Such turns in State use to come with Force, and Arbitrary Power ; and then Armies lived at Discretion : But our Change was with the vogue of the People, who thought no price too great for so happy a Deliverance.

The King who was in the Head of it, a Stranger to men as well as management in the Nation, could not bring Strangers into Offices and Employments, I mean such of our selves as had never been in Business before, but was of necessity forced to employ those who had been in business of the State ; and from such Plants a good Fruit could be expected ; and their opportunity for Frauds was such, as perhaps no Age ever presented in former times. The Nation then went gradually step by step into Levies and Taxes, and there was time to take care of the Management : but now we were forced to leap into them with a running Jump, too much without Method or Controul ; and that led our Managers, I verily believe, into greater Frauds, than even the wicked Spirit that guided them at first, foresaw. For how could it be imagined that the Spoil should be so great, that a Sweeper of an Office, of twenty pounds *per Annum* Stipend, should arrive in four Years to an Estate of six thousand Pounds ? and Clerks in Offices of eighty Pounds *per Annum* Salary, to a Purchase of twenty thousand Pounds Sterling ? And in this proportion it is said to go generally through all the Offices of the Kingdom. And this Management has been laid with so great Judgment, that the qualifications of a Person for an Employment were to have good Testimonials that he understood

derstood the World; a soft Character for a Knave. And this is too notorious by the unanimous conspiracy of all in Employments, when the least of them was attack'd: I need not name particulars, which are in every days Pamphlers, too much to the scandal of our Nation and Government: Pray God it may not be to the Ruin of both!

Thus you see I agree with your first Inquiry, as to Fact, tho not to the Inference you make, which I think to be too sharp.

I end this Head with the words of a Heathen, which I think better Divinity than we practise in this Age, *viz.* That to keep our selves quiet in this World, we must aim at nothing that Men count worth wrangling for. It would be one good step to a Re'orm, if Offices in the State were disposed as they are in Corporations, as an Imposition, to Men that have got Estates, to serve their Country, not to men of expectations to gain Estates by Offices: That is advancing the Wasp above the Bee.

We should consider the practice of our Neighbours, the *Dutch*, and there we shall find no Man in any place of Trust that has his Fortune to make: and some tell us, that all the Civil Employments in that Commonwealth put together, amount not to the Sum that one Noble Lord, a Friend or otherwise to the Army, has raised out of his Employment.

Your second Enquiry is, *Whether there can be parallel'd in Heathen, much less Christian Government, such immoral and profane Men in Places of Power and Trust?*

This Query gives such a Latitude for answering, that I might easily prove the Affirmative; but then I must confess

confess that to make the Parallel I must go abroad ; for I cannot find it in any Reign at home. But if we look into the Reason of this Misfortune, we shall find it the same we have just now given for the Frauds in our Managers of the Revenue : Did not the King find some of them in Employments, even them you most complain of? Were not others of them early in assisting the King in this Revolution? If we calmly reflected on this, we should not believe these Men to be the King's choice, or entertain a thought that he supports them. A Body full of Hereditary Distempers, must undergo a course of Physick for Recovery : a violent Purge and Bleeding might endanger the whole. We have had such great Proofs of the King's Wisdom and Conduct, that methinks we should trust him, and satisfy our selves with a Maxim of the Lord *Verulam*, *If you would make haste, stay a while*. I differ with you, that the King loses good Men by letting bad Men continue so long in Power. I cannot dive into the secrets of Princes, but to me it seems great Policy for our King in our present Circumstances, to let faulty Men be fully laid open to the People, before he removes them ; and then they will not be able, as too often we have seen it, to make Parties among the People, when their faults have drove them out of the Court. I know you will say that the Men complained of have sufficiently laid themselves open, to the general Abhorrence of the Nation ; and therefore the Reason before given is out of doors. It's true, and therefore I give it for the time past, hoping that the King by this time sees the Transgressors are fully understood and known in the Nation, whose Eyes are on his Majesty for Reformation in this matter, as a foundation for a righteous Government. *Seneca* was in the right when

when he tells us, *It is an ill Age where Vice hath got a Reputation, and the Dissolute have lost the only good thing they had, the shame of offending.* This hath been too much our case, but you and I will hope very soon to see better times, and that the Enemies of our Government shall find themselves exposed for those wicked and false Insinuations whereby they would conceal their own Crimes.

Your third Query is, *Whether I have ever heard in any Christian Government of a Clergy that so tenderly handled the Sins of a Nation, and the Vices of great Men, as our Clergy in this Reign?*

This Question, I must needs say, is more surprizing than all the rest: You seem at one stroke to wound the whole Body of the Clergy, in which I think you are to blame. And so far do I differ from you in this Remark on the Clergy, that on the contrary I think we never had a more learned and pious Clergy. None can deny it as to the Bishops made in this Reign. What Age can you turn to, and shew where there has been more constant Preaching and instructing of Youth? When was there such frequent preaching against leud and profane Conversation? Really, Sir, I fear you live in some ill Neighbourhood, or perhaps hear none but Court-Sermons; and there indeed Men too often flatter. A Bishoprick or a Deanery, like Charity, hides a multitude of faults: But we don't see many of these Spaniel Tongue-pads preferred. And now, Sir, give me leave to tell you among what sort of Men it is my Lot to fall, and to hear preach; one is a Doctor famed for Learning and Piety, whom I heard deliver himself in a great Congregation in these words, *It is too often the fault of learned*  
Men

*Ment to flatter Princes, and we find the Translators of our Bible guilty in this matter, or they would not so grossly have erred in that where they translate ; Who saith to a King thou art wicked : Whereas in the Hebrew it is, Thou shalt say to a King thou art wicked ; that is, said the Doctor, if he be so he should be told of it.* And agreeable to this Doctrine, I think it to be the opinion of most good Men, that it is the Duty of our Clergy to reach those Sins of great Men in Government in their Pulpits, which they cannot come at in their Persons. And this may be done without personal Reflections, by declaiming against Things, not Men ; and if our Clergy do not this as much as they ought, I fear it is our own fault. We generally cry down, and with good reason, Pulpit-Statefmen ; and often run that truth beyond its bounds. I would not have dictated from a Pulpit, what Men should be advanced, or who disgraced ; what Laws should be made, what abrogated ; but I think it comes well from a Pulpit to tell us that a Prince cannot be well served, or a Nation preserved by such Ministers in the Government as make a mock of Sin, and hate and keep from Employments all that pretend to Sobriety. These Wolves in Royal Clothing are the Vermin of a good Government ; and yet these are the Reformers of our Age, that distinguish themselves by the name of Whigs, whom once we knew by their pretences to Religion and Property, but now they are Apostates to both. You may find some of them in every Commission in the Kingdom, and too many of them where such poisonous Plants should be pluck'd up by the Roots. It was the Observation of a good Man, That ill Ministers make ill Times, and ill Times continue and increase ill Ministers ; and this seems to be our Misfortune.

Your fourth Query is, *Whether this fault in our Clergy, and a greater Corruption in those we call the Whig or Dissenting Party, have not given our Enemies, the Church of Rome, greater matter of scandal against the Protestant Religion, than any thing that has happen'd since the Reformation?*

This is too plain to be denied, and our Miscarriage too great a fault to excuse.

That which I have made the Rule of my Faith, hath always been the Holy Scriptures; and of that Community which is govern'd by them, I choose to be a Member. Now that our Church (let mistaken Friends or profest Enemies say what they can) began the Reformation with the greatest Purity of Life, as well as Orthodoxy of Doctrine, none but they who support their Church (if it be one) by denying their Members the liberty of their Senses, can deny.

But in Controversy, that Argument which every Understanding can comprehend will prevail most; and we have that on our side, which is a Reformation in Manners as well as Doctrine from the Romanists: and this will convert Heathens, when School-Controversies might distract them. Should a Heathen see that our Doctrine and Church-Discipline oblige us to an holy, sober, and religious Life, and that no Man is accounted such among us that wants Morals; that our Religion and Church-Government admits of no indulgence for Sins, nor thinks any venial; but that plainness of Spirit, and integrity in all our Actions is the Badg of a Christian: And if on the other hand the Romanists should appear in their shapes, as teaching that there is no faith to be kept with a Heretick; that Lies, Oaths, and all manner of Vice may be dispens'd with for promoting their Cause; and that they can forgive, nay saint a Criminal guilty of Sins  
that

that Heathens abhor and never pardon: Were these things, I say, considered by Men that never heard of Christianity, I think the Controversy would easily be decided. For when we have said all, *Morals* are the common Touchstone that will prevail with Mankind.

And now I come to your most sensible part in this Question; Whether our present Management in Publick Affairs by immoral Men doth not give the Enemies of our Religion and Nation advantages over us, they never had before? I must own in my opinion it dos, and for this reason; because that which procured us of the Reformation credit and esteem in the World when we separated from them, was, as I said before, the Purity of our Doctrine; but that would not have been so well understood in the World, if it had not been accompanied with plain honest *Morals* between Man and Man. It was, if we believe Story, even in the Reign of *Edward* the Sixth, a Proverb among the Papists; *I am as sure of my Contract, as if I had the word of a Heretick*. Now if we lose the Character of Moralists, I fear we shall want the most powerful Perswasive that brings in Converts, and the best Antidote against Popish and Atheistical Delusions.

I confess I am silenced when Papists and Jacobites compare the Ministers of the late Reign with ours; but I tell them they are mostly the same Men. Their return leaves me little to say, when they name our great Whigs Liberty and Property: Men that pretended to be Martyrs for the Religion and Laws in the late Reigns, but are now Deserters of both. By this I confess we put Weapons into the hands of our Enemies to destroy us. What can we say in defence of our Church and Religion, when we are managed by them that hate the first, and ridicule the latter? Ask them what is their Religion, they tell you

they are Whigs: What are Whigs? Are they Prebyterians, Independents, &c. ? No, they are no Meeters. What then? At last it comes only to this, they hate high Church-men, and would as an Expedient have none at all. And agreeable to their Profession is their Practice, as leud as *Sodom*, and fraudulent as *Judas*. And our Misfortune is the common Misery; for where their numbers are great, the whole Government lies under the blackest Character that ever this Nation bore.

This fourth Query of yours puts me upon a Review of the Chronicles and Annals of this Kingdom; and tho we find various Misfortunes, almost as many as Kings, yet among all we meet with none that bear any proportion to those we are now under. Many Men and Families have been cut off according to the Power and Pleasure of a prevailing Faction; but still the Ministry and Men in publick Trust were just to their own side. Revenues were not swallowed up by Managers, nor were any so hardy as to advocate for them that were but suspected; insomuch that I don't find above three Men in four hundred years before the late Reigns who were questioned for mismanagement in publick Receipts, that went off without a Censure of another nature than Addressing. I fear such tender handling doth not only encourage faulty Men at home, but renders us a decaying and lost People abroad. I cannot see how we shall defend our selves against Foren Force, when we are conquer'd by home Frauds: and that which makes it look like a spreading Leprosy is, that those whose Actions are so notorious in one Post that they cannot hide it, have only the Punishment of being removed to another, as soon as one can be found of the same Qualifications to succeed him; the natural Consequence of which must be, that in a little  
time



time their numbers will be too great to be call'd into question. It is indeed astonishing to see that so many Men of great Estates, and English Blood, should be so blind as not to perceive that if these things hold, the Nation is lost. I have bin so long on this fourth Query, that I have little room or time for the other three ; so I shall end this with a Resolution of *Seneca*, and were I not an English-man, say to my Country as he did to Fortune, That *he would have nothing to do with it that repulsed Cato, and preferr'd Vitellius.*

Your fifth Query is, *Whether under our present Management and Conduct, it may not be easy for the late King to return, and establish himself without a foren Force ?*

This Conceit smells of the Cask, and argues too much Fear, and too little Faith. I confess such Corruption, and ill Management as we are under, is always the fore-runner of a ruined State ; and our Case seems almost desperate, when the greatest part of a Session is spent in hearing Complaints, Addresses, &c. against Mal-Administration. This opens the Eyes of the Nation, and it may be feared will break forth one way or other : But I cannot think any true English-man, however disabled by this, or engaged by Favours of the late King, can ever have a Thought or Wish for his, or rather French-Tyranny. He must be degenerate to a Prodigy, that would turn Slave to the French ; and he must have lost his Reason that frames an Idea of any thing else under the late King, who had he ever so good Inclinations, must act by the dictates of his French Master.

For these Reasons, I think it next to an impossibility for the late King to return without a Foren Force. All my fear is from our Distractions at home ; for we cannot call them Divisions, Factions, and Parties, such as formerly  
were

were the cause of Wars and Calamities among us.

We are now under a Distemper that this Nation never heard of before ; all for the King, (for so 'tis, if the Major comprehend the Minor) and none for the Ministers. It will be the wonder of Ages to come, as it is the Torment of this, to see our selves ruined by a few Men that have no Interest or Party in the Nation. A pleasant Gentleman the other Day said, he believed that one Wherry would carry away all their Friends, if they were separated from Employments. And there may be Reason to believe it, if we consider their Politicks, which shew them to be at their last shifts, and like Teague, who running too fast in a Race, had nothing to excuse his fault, but that he run away with himself. So our Managers way of justifying themselves, is to criminate the whole Nation. When they of the Church complain, then they are *Jacobites* ; when Dissenters find fault, they are for a *Common-wealth* : but this Charm that for some time deluded well meaning Men is seen through, and the Mask thrown off. Arts and Stratagems in Government, in our Kingdoms, have not that effect they have among other Nations : We are a free People, and such have not a slavish Understanding. The humour of the English Nation is like that of *Cato*, *who would not have it in the power of any Man to say he killed or saved Cato*. Englishmen will not endure to have it said, that any Trick, or any set of Men have power to save or lose *England* : They think themselves safe by no other ways and means than those of their Constitution in Church and State ; and if they were duly observed, Mushroom Projectors would not set up against English Oaks. The ancient Nobility and Gentry of the Nation, were always the main support of the Crown.

Your

Your *sixth Query*, is a desire of my Approbation to your Prediction ; to which I can give no Answer, but if what you fear be true, it is an ill time to convert People, when they find both Advantage and Reputation in their Wick- edness.

Your last Query is, *Whether a Government that neither rewards nor punishes, doth not suppress Virtue, and encourage Vice ?*

No doubt it does ; but I will answer your Question with another, Did you ever know corrupt Ministers punish themselves, or reward what they hate ? Single Vices are curable by single Counsels, but a general Dissoluteness in Government is hardly overcome. I therefore think the King hath a more difficult work than delivering us from the known Enemies of our Laws and Religion. In that we joined ; but so unhappy we are, that against the depravity of them that would be our Masters, we can do nothing, but must stand still and see it done by the King alone ; if we speak out, we are Mutineers, and enemies to the Government.

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